City of Tucson Development Ombudsperson Program

Background/Purpose

The purpose of the ombudsperson program is to ensure that significant development projects move forward efficiently through the City's development review process and that construction projects are brought to fruition as expeditiously as possible. The ombudsperson program is intended to stimulate the local economy, produce a positive customer experience, and reinforce a business-friendly climate in Tucson.

Criteria for Selection

The following criteria will be used as a guide to determine projects that are assigned an ombudsperson:

- Projects deemed high profile by the City Manager's Office
- Projects involving a development agreement with the City
- Projects that involve annexation
- Projects of significant scale, dollar investment, and complexity
- Projects of significant economic benefit to the City
- Projects located downtown or along the Modern Streetcar route
- Commercial and industrial projects that involve TREO

Benefits Provided to Projects

- One point of contact to navigate all city-related issues throughout the development process
- Mayor's Start Right meeting
- Coordinated development review process
- Dedicated building inspector program
- Bi-weekly project review by Assistant City Manager and cross-departmental economic development team
- Prompt trouble shooting and resolution of issues that arise

How the Process Works

- Projects are identified and recommended by Assistant City Manager and PDSD Director for ombudsperson status.
- A city staff member is assigned to be the ombudsperson for a project. Staff assigned as ombudspersons are typically from one of the following departments: Planning and Development Services, the City Manager's Office, Housing and

Community Development, Parkwise, the Downtown Partnership or General Services.

- Project is entered into spreadsheet tracking system by CMO ombudsperson coordinator
- Projects are reported on bi-weekly at the City Manager's Economic Development Team meeting
- Formal letter sent by the CMO ombudsperson coordinator from Asst City Manger to developer. Letter communicates contact info, benefits, expectations, etc.
- Mayor's "Start Right" kick off meeting held with Mayor, Assistant City Mgr, PDSD Director/Deputy, ombudsperson, and developer
- The ombudsperson serves as the central point of contact for the project and communicates regularly with the developer on project status and progress
- Ombudsperson works toward resolution of issues that arise that might delay or create problems for the project. To do this, the ombudsperson troubleshoots issues, facilitates meetings involving other City staff, and helps to identify solutions for moving forward.
- The ombudsperson will help hold the City accountable for facilitating project results. The ombudsperson is expected to promote communication, teamwork, and accountability across the many City departments that impact the development.